

CUSTODY EVALUATION CHECKLIST
FAMILY COURT SERVICES 817-884-1616

Please review the following information before your Orientation date. The Custody Evaluation process and other options available to you will be discussed in detail at Orientation. BOTH parents or parties are required to attend Orientation on the same date. You have been given an Orientation appointment slip, which shows your scheduled date and time and other important information.

1. How much is the Custody Evaluation fee and where do I go to pay it?

The fee is \$500 per party unless the court orders otherwise. The Custody Evaluation will not begin or be assigned to a caseworker until the full fee is paid by all parties. Pay the fee to the Child Support Office (**817-884-1475**) on the 2nd Floor of the Family Law Center.

2. When is my Orientation scheduled?

You have been given an Orientation appointment slip which shows your scheduled date and time. You and the other parent/party must attend Orientation on the same date. If you need to change the date, you must coordinate the change with the other party.

3. What is a Personal Data Form?

A Personal Data Form is an extensive list of information we need from you in order to conduct Custody Evaluation. You will be given a Personal Data Form at Orientation. The Personal Data Form must be **fully completed**, including complete street addresses and zip codes, and turned in at the time of your first office interview. If information is missing, you will be sent away and your interview rescheduled. ALL adults in your home will be required to complete a Personal Data Form and participate in the Custody Evaluation investigation.

4. Should I bring my children to Family Court Services or to Court?

NO! Do not bring children unless you are specifically instructed to by a caseworker, a judge or your attorney.

5. Where will the Custody Evaluation interview take place?

We usually conduct the first interview with a parent/party at the Family Court Services office. We may interview children in the office, at the child's school or at home.

6. Who will be interviewed?

We usually interview all adults who live in or spend the night in the home, regardless of their relationship. This includes spouses, boyfriends/girlfriends, roommates, family members etc. We usually interview all children who are subjects of the litigation, unless they are too young to communicate. We may interview other children who live in the home (or visit a parent in the home) who are not subjects of the present litigation.

7. How long will the interview take?

The average first office interview is two hours, but may be longer or shorter.

8. Will you come to my home?

We usually make a home visit to both parents/parties, usually scheduled in advance, but sometimes unannounced.

9. Other than the Custody Evaluation fee, are there other expenses I will have to pay?

- If you live 50 miles or more from the Family Law Center, you will be asked to pay in advance for the estimated cost of travel to and from your home. This may include mileage, airfare, gas, hotel, meals, tolls, rental cars, etc.
- If a temporary or final Custody Evaluation is completed and the file is closed, you will be required to pay an additional Custody Evaluation fee in order to re-open the case.

10. How long does the Custody Evaluation investigation take and how will I know when it is completed?

Assuming everyone cooperates in the process, the average investigation is completed in 90 days. The caseworker will write a recommendation letter when he or she has completed the investigation. The recommendation letter will be sent to your attorney and filed with the Court.